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Accountability Minutes 07/22/2008

Minutes for Tuesday, July 22, 2008 Meeting
of the
District Accountability Subcommittee
of the
Arlington School Committee

School Committee Room, Arlington, Massachusetts

(Approved September 8, 2008)

Present: Subcommittee Members -- Joseph A. Curro, Jr. (Chair)
Leba Heigham

Nate Levenson, Superintendent of Schools

Absent: Subcommittee Member Joseph E. Curran

The Subcommittee Chair called the meeting to order at 5:07 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

Approval of Minutes for the June 24, 2008 meeting was deferred to a future date to allow Mr. Curran to participate in the vote.

Review of Current Year Goals

The Superintendent reviewed one-page worksheets for a subset of goals, each of which worksheet included an explanation of progress against the goal and a recommended number of points to be awarded. He also presented back-up data where applicable.

Goals discussed included:

1. a) (Special Education Timelines – 4 potential points): Mr. Levenson recommended the awarding of 2 points. He also explained that data points due in June have by practice been recorded against the following academic year's progress. Ms. Heigham moved that the subcommittee recommend the awarding of 2 points. This motion was seconded by Mr. Curro and unanimously approved.

1. c) (Teacher Assistance Teams – 3 potential points): Mr. Levenson recommended the awarding of 3 points. Ms. Heigham moved that the subcommittee recommend the awarding of 3 points. This motion was seconded by Mr. Curro and unanimously approved.

1. i) (Middle School Self-Reflection and Special Education Audit – 2 potential points): The attendees conducted an extensive discussion of the Walker Report. Mr. Levenson noted that 100% of special education staff were interviewed, that these interviews went well, and that staff were candid. Interviews were scheduled for 20 minutes, but many lasted for up to twice as long. Mr. Levenson recommended the awarding of 2 points. Ms. Heigham moved that the subcommittee recommend an award of 2 points. This motion was seconded by Mr. Curro and unanimously approved.

2. f) (Grades 3-5 Reading Comprehension Pilot – 1 potential point): Ms. Heigham pointed out that the requirements appeared

to have been met based on the language of the goal, but she noted that in the future the committee should define what constitutes success. Mr. Levenson recommended the awarding of 1 point. Ms. Heigham moved to recommend the award of 1 point. Mr. Curro seconded this, and the motion passed unanimously.

2. i) (Measure Achievement for K-8 Math – 3 potential points): The Superintendent stated that the first year this was proposed as a goal, the administrative cabinet requested its removal and that the goal was not met in the second year. This is the third try. Ms. Heigham asked how the numbers were skewed by students who were not here last year, and the Superintendent committed to looking into this. Mr. Levenson recommended the awarding of 3 points. Ms. Heigham moved that the subcommittee recommend the award of 3 points. Mr. Curro seconded this motion, which was passed unanimously.

The chair declared a recess at 5:55 p.m., and the subcommittee was reconvened at 6:12 p.m.

2. j) (K-10 Writing Common Assessments – 3 potential points): Mr. Levenson recommended the awarding of 3 points. Ms. Heigham moved that the subcommittee recommend the award of 3 points. Mr. Curro seconded this, and the motion passed unanimously.

2. k) (Increase K-2 Reading Achievement – 2 potential points): Mr. Levenson expressed pride in this achievement, given the investment. Ms. Heigham asked if there had been changes in the test. Mr. Levenson indicated that there was no year-on-year change and that the DR-1 was being used. Ms. Heigham asked why some first grades showed a dip. Mr. Levenson indicated that there may be a need for “more arrows in the quiver,” as first grade involves more decoding than drilling. The Superintendent recommended the awarding of 2 points. Ms. Heigham moved that the subcommittee recommend the award of 2 points. Mr. Curro seconded this, and the motion passed unanimously.

2. m) (Middle School Schedule – 1 potential point): Mr. Levenson expressed a belief that 4 out of the 5 criteria for this goal had been met. He noted that the middle school and high school schedules do not synch up and that there was no fundamental alteration of the seven period schedule. The Superintendent indicated that it had not been logistically possible to enable teachers to split their time between the high school and middle school. Mr. Levenson recommended the awarding of 0.8 points. Both Mr. Curro and Ms. Heigham raised concerns with the precedent of awarding fractional points. Ms. Heigham moved to recommend the award of 0 points. Mr. Curro seconded this, and the motion passed unanimously.

2. n) (Best Practices for K-8 Academically Able Students – 2 potential points): Mr. Levenson recommended the awarding of 2 points. Ms. Heigham moved that the subcommittee recommend the award of 2 points. Mr. Curro seconded this, and the motion passed unanimously.

2. o) (Research Observation and Evaluation Models – 1 potential point): Mr. Levenson recommended the awarding of 0 points. Ms. Heigham moved that the subcommittee recommend the award of 0 points. Mr. Curro seconded this, and the motion passed unanimously.

3. l) (Investigate Science and Engineering Program – 3 potential points): Mr. Levenson recommended the awarding of 3 points. Ms. Heigham moved that the subcommittee recommend the award of 3 points. Mr. Curro seconded this, and the motion passed unanimously.

4. b) (Streamline Purchase Order Processing – 2 potential points): Mr. Levenson recommended the awarding of 2 points. Ms. Heigham moved that the subcommittee recommend the award of 2 points. Mr. Curro seconded this, and the motion passed unanimously.

4. c) (Web-Based Maintenance Request and Tracking System – 3 potential points): Mr. Levenson recommended the awarding of 2 points. Ms. Heigham moved that the subcommittee recommend the award of 2 points. Mr. Curro seconded this, and the motion passed unanimously.

4. d) (Online Event and Activity Calendar – 2 potential points): Mr. Levenson recommended the awarding of 2 points. Upon examining the calendar, Mr. Curro asked whether this had truly been adopted by all schools. Mr. Levenson agreed to investigate the matter, and further action was deferred on this goal, pending the outcome of such investigation.

4. e) (Thompson/Stratton/High School Capital Plan – 3 potential points): Mr. Levenson recommended the awarding of 3 points. Ms. Heigham moved that the subcommittee recommend the award of 3 points. Mr. Curro seconded this, and the motion passed unanimously.

4. f) (Pilot Cashless Payment System for Lunch – 2 potential points): Mr. Levenson recommended the awarding of 2 points. Ms. Heigham moved that the subcommittee recommend the award of 2 points. Mr. Curro seconded this, and the motion passed unanimously.

Adjournment

On motion of Ms. Heigham, seconded by Mr. Curro, the Subcommittee voted unanimously to adjourn at 7:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joseph A. Curro, Jr., Chair
District Accountability Subcommittee